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KIETH
MESSNER-LOEBS
THE MAXX
maxximized

THE MAXX MAXXIMIZED

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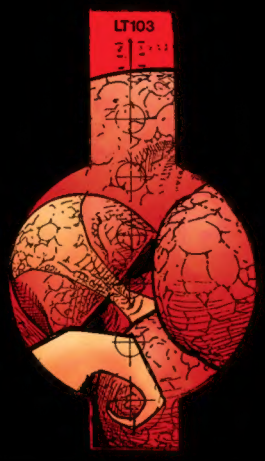


"A BIT MORE TO THE LEFT... MORE... MORE... THERE.

"NOW DOWN... FURTHER...

"AHHH. PERFECT. THAT'S HIS ACCURSED CLAW... THE ONE THAT ALMOST...

"NOW I WANT TO SEE HIS OTHER CLAW, TO BROOD OVER HIM AS HE SLEEPS, JUST AS HE BROODED OVER ME AS I LAY HELPLESS, POWERLESS BEFORE HIS BESTIAL WRATH!"

HEY, MAXX! WAKE UP!

"NO, YOU IDIOT! THAT'S HER OTHER FOOT!

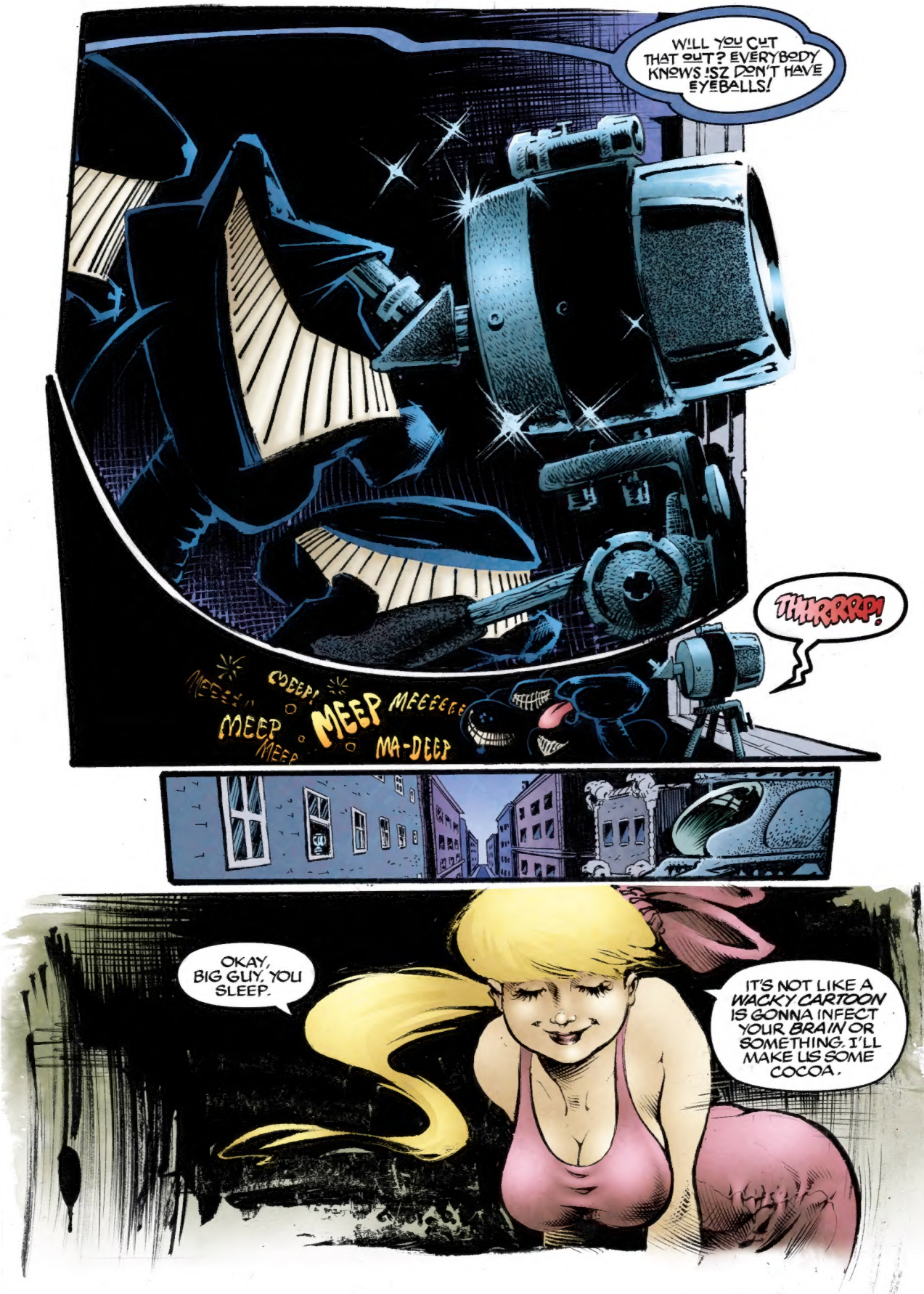
"BRING THE SCANNER DOWN!

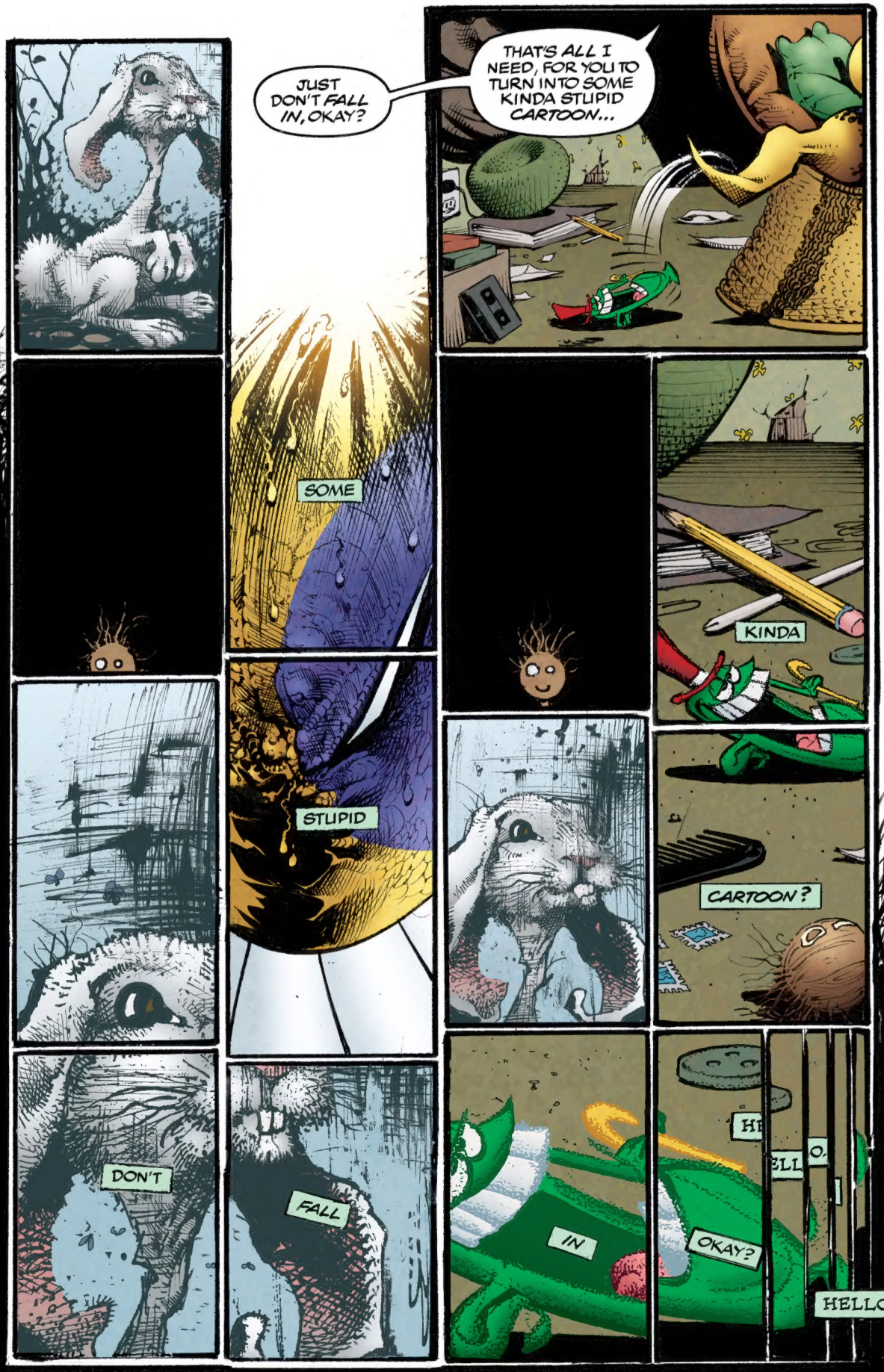
"NOT UP! DOWN... DOWN!

"THAT'S BETTER. NOW I CAN THINK.

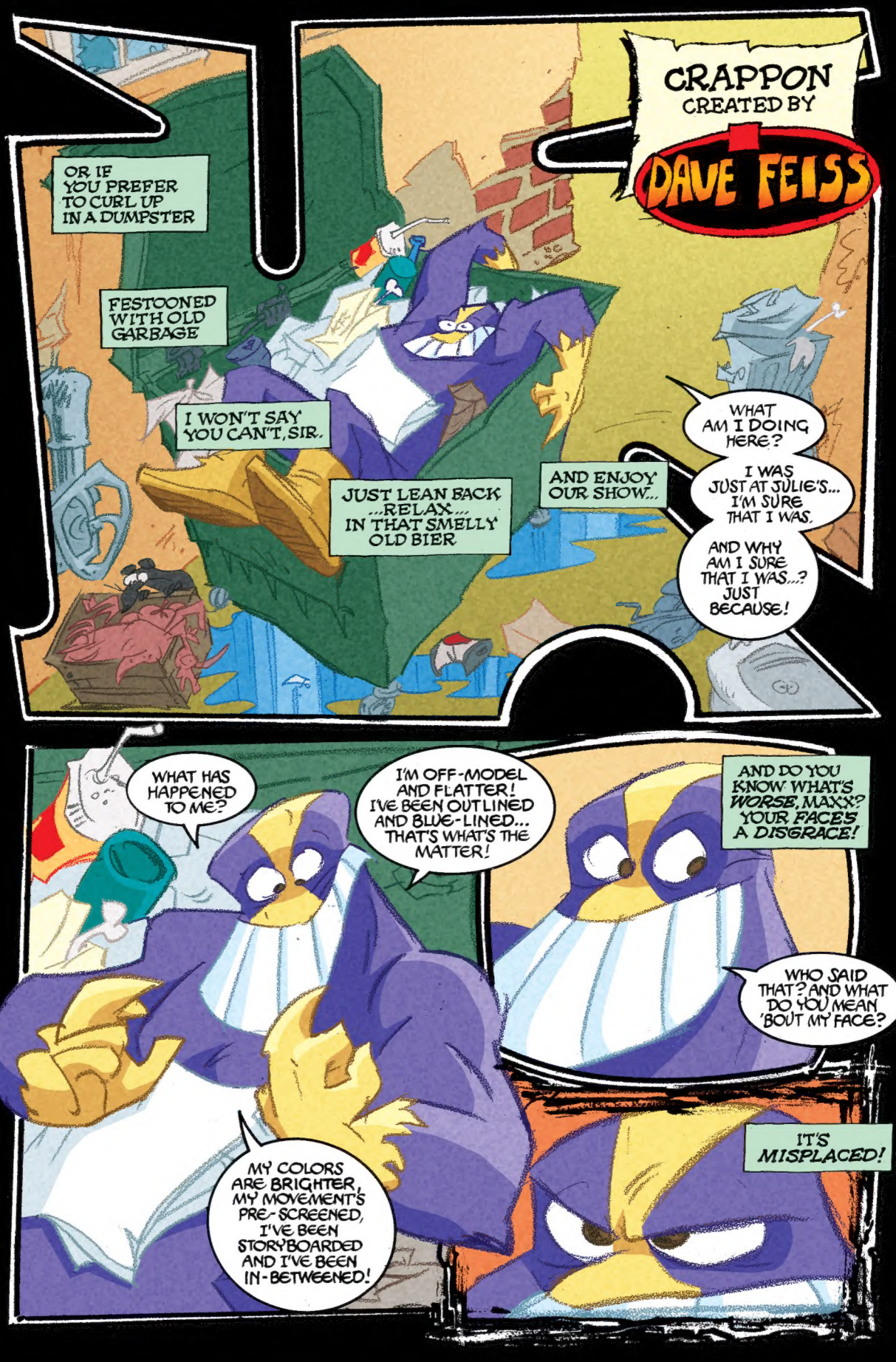
"NOW I CAN PLAN!"

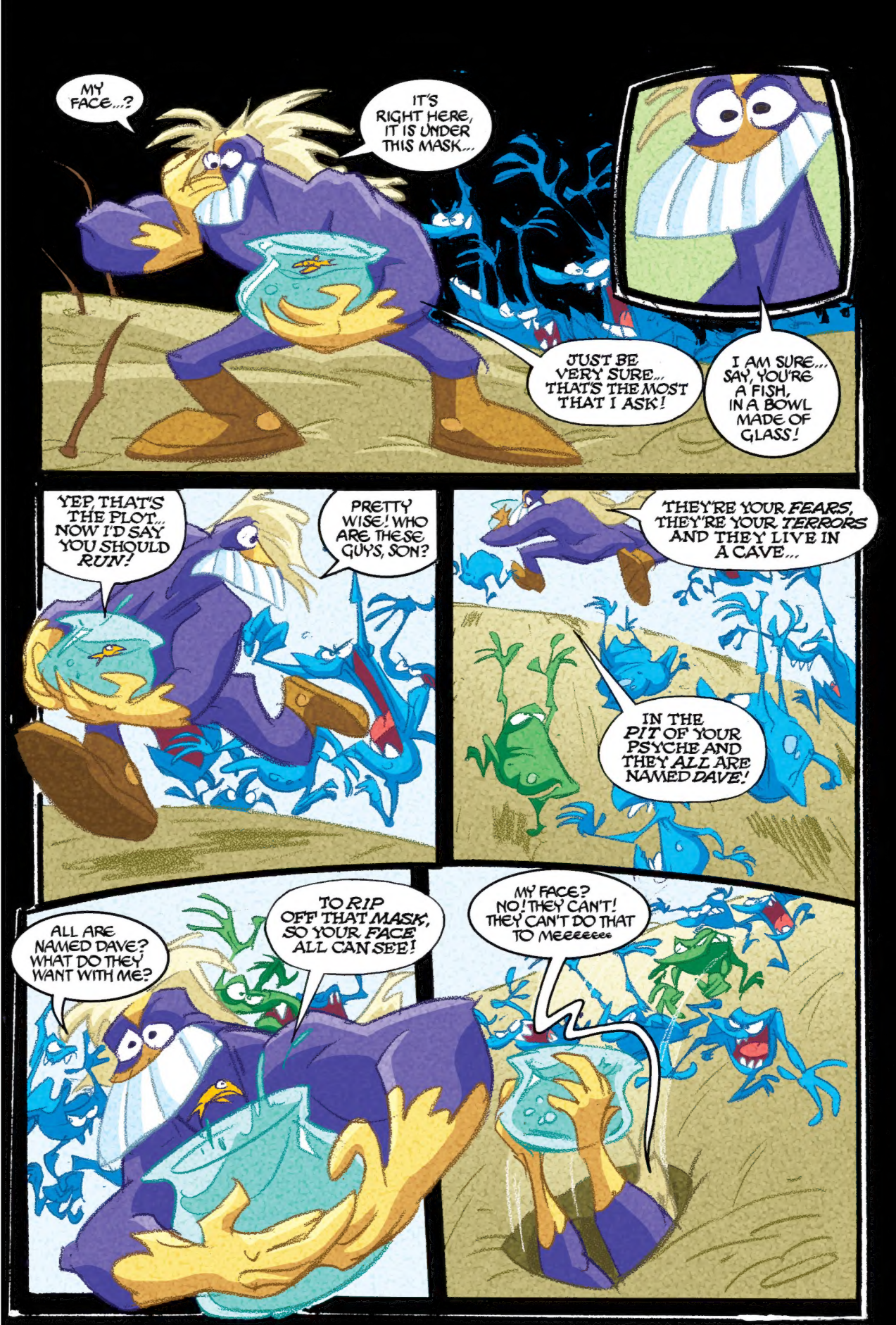
IT'S THE SAME *EVERY* SATURDAY MORNING. YOU CURL UP WATCHING *CARTOONS* AND FALL *ASLEEP!*
AND WHAT CARTOONS? THE *CRAPPON INNA HAT!* MUST BE THE STUPIDEST CARTOON EVER MADE!
I MEAN... "*THE CRAPPON INNA HAT* TEAMS UP WITH *JEAN-PAUL SARTRE* TO FIGHT *NAUSEA!*" CARTOONS TODAY ARE SO PRETENTIOUS!
AHA!
I COULD BLOW THEM BOTH AWAY FROM HERE! NOT THAT I WOULD, OF COURSE. I DON'T OPERATE THAT WAY! STILL...


WILL YOU CUT THAT OUT? EVERYBODY KNOWS ISZ DON'T HAVE EYEBALLS!
THHRRRP!
MEEP
MEEEEEE
MEEP
MEEP
MEEP
MA-DEEP
OKAY, BIG GUY, YOU SLEEP.
IT'S NOT LIKE A WACKY CARTOON IS GONNA INFECT YOUR BRAIN OR SOMETHING. I'LL MAKE US SOME COCOA.


JUST DON'T FALL IN, OKAY?
THAT'S ALL I NEED, FOR YOU TO TURN INTO SOME KINDA STUPID CARTOON...
SOME
KINDA
STUPID
CARTOON?
DON'T
FALL
IN
OKAY?
HELLO.

YES, HELLO TO ME...
AND HELLO TO YOU!
I AM THE CRAPPON
I LIVE IN THE ZOO!
AND IT'S SUCH A FRIENDLY OLD ZOO
AND SUCH FUN...
YOU ALL WILL ENJOY IT... YES, YOU WILL, EVERY ONE!
EVERY TWO WILL ENJOY IT... EVERY THREE... EVERY FOUR...
SO COME VISIT MY ZOO, CURL UP ON THE FLOOR
WE'LL BE FRIENDLY AS BUGS... SO COME ON, I IMPLORE!


CRAPPON
CREATED BY
DAVE FEISS
OR, IF YOU PREFER TO CURL UP IN A DUMPSTER
FESTOONED WITH OLD GARBAGE
I WON'T SAY YOU CAN'T, SIR.
JUST LEAN BACK ...RELAX... IN THAT SMELLY OLD BIER
AND ENJOY OUR SHOW...
WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
I WAS JUST AT JULIE'S... I'M SURE THAT I WAS.
AND WHY AM I SURE THAT I WAS...? JUST BECAUSE!
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME?
I'M OFF-MODEL AND FLATTER! I'VE BEEN OUTLINED AND BLUE-LINED... THAT'S WHAT'S THE MATTER!
MY COLORS ARE BRIGHTER, MY MOVEMENT'S PRE-SCREENED, I'VE BEEN STORYBOARDED AND I'VE BEEN IN-BETWEENED!
AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S WORSE, MAXX? YOUR FACE'S A DISGRACE!
WHO SAID THAT? AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'BOUT MY FACE?
IT'S MISPLACED!


MY FACE...?
IT'S RIGHT HERE, IT IS UNDER THIS MASK...
I AM SURE... SAY, YOU'RE A FISH, IN A BOWL MADE OF GLASS!
JUST BE VERY SURE... THAT'S THE MOST THAT I ASK!
YEP, THAT'S THE PLOT... NOW I'D SAY YOU SHOULD RUN!
PRETTY WISE! WHO ARE THESE GUYS, SON?
THEY'RE YOUR FEARS, THEY'RE YOUR TERRORS AND THEY LIVE IN A CAVE...
IN THE PIT OF YOUR PSYCHE AND THEY ALL ARE NAMED DAVE!
ALL ARE NAMED DAVE? WHAT DO THEY WANT WITH ME?
TO RIP OFF THAT MASK, SO YOUR FACE ALL CAN SEE!
MY FACE? NO! THEY CAN'T! THEY CAN'T DO THAT TO MEeeeeee

I'M AFRAID THAT THEY CAN. AND I'M A GUY WHO SHOULD KNOW.
YOU SEE, I'M THE CRAPPON... AND THIS IS MY SHOW!
AND I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE GOT 'NEATH THAT MASK... I JUST KNOW!
THAT'S NOT TRUE! I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST ANIMATED!
BUT I'M JUST AS REAL AS YOU ARE...MAYBE REALER.
EACH LINE THAT DEFINES ME IS CAREFULLY WEIGHTED.
THIS IS JUST A MAD JAIL AND YOU'RE THE MAD JAILER.
I AM THE MAXX! I CANNOT BE HELD!
BY ONE WHO'S DECIPHERED WHAT'S UNDER YOUR MASK! DO YOU WANT TO KNOW...? WELL, DO YOU? JUST ASK!
SUCH MINOR REBELLIONS ARE EASILY QUELLED...

I KNOW IT ALL, AND TO PROVE THAT I DO, THIS DUDE'S THE STRAIGHT SKINNY. HE'S HEAD OF MY CREW.
AND THIS GUY'S THE POOP...
AND THIS ONE'S THE SNOT. I'D SAY HE'S THE DOPE, BUT HE'S NOT...
NO, HE'S SNOT!
FRIEND FISH, THEY ARE TRYING TO TEAR OFF MY MASK... TO SHOW ME THE THING THAT I'M FRIGHTENED TO ASK... PLEASE GIVE ME ADVICE. I'M BEGGING YOU, PLEASE...
THAT FISH IS YOUR CONSCIENCE, AND SHE'S WHEEZED HER LAST WHEEZE!
YOU'RE ALL ALONE, MAXX... YOUR MISSION'S FORGOT. THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN REMEMBER IS SNOT! YOUR FACE IS A FIGMENT OF A MAN WITH NO HEAD!
YOUR MASK IT IS EVIL AND YOUR FISH... IT IS DEAD!

MY MASK IS NOT EVIL! IT'S A CLEVER DISGUISE!
I CHOSE IT TO HIDE FROM THE PRYINGEST EYES.
SO I COULD DO GOOD! AND MY FISH IS NOT DEAD!
MY FISH IS ALIVE!
THIS IS NOT IN MY HEAD!
EEEKS! MY FEARS HAVE RETURNED!
IT IS TIME THAT I BOOKED!
I COULD FACE MY FACE! IT IS TIME THAT I LOOKED!
BUT MY FACE ISN'T HUMAN, OF THAT I AM SURE!
IT'S THE MOST HORRID, HORRIBLE THING TO OCCUR, AND IT'S COVERED BY SCALES OR IT'S COVERED BY FUR!

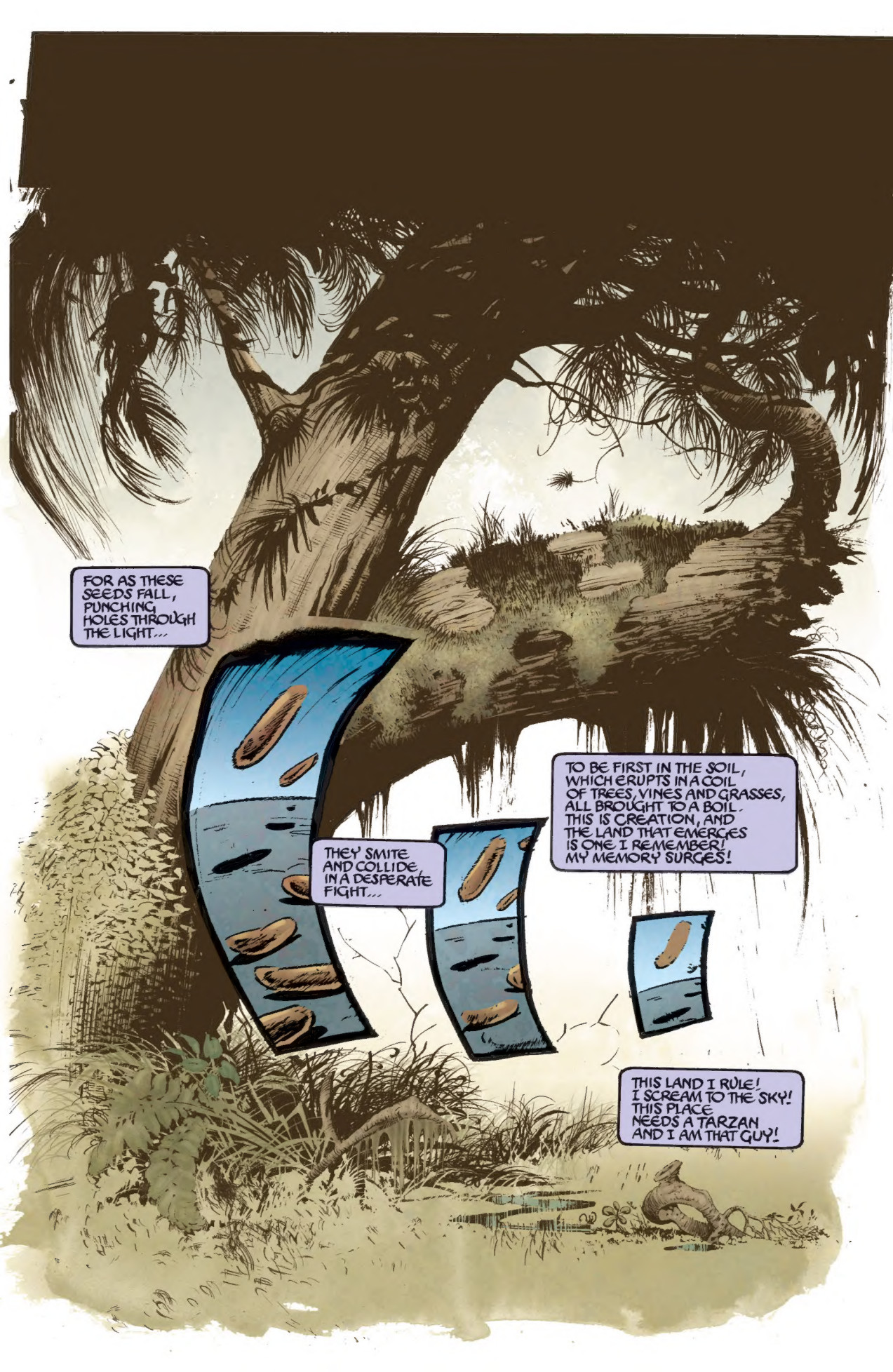
IT COULD BE A BEAR'S HEAD
OR MAYBE AN OWL!
IT COULD LOOK LIKE FISH EGGS, LAID ON WITH A TROWEL!
SOMETHING GROTESQUE... SOMETHING, MOST FOUL!
LIKE THE FINS OF A SHARK WRAPPED IN SOME-BODY'S BOWEL!

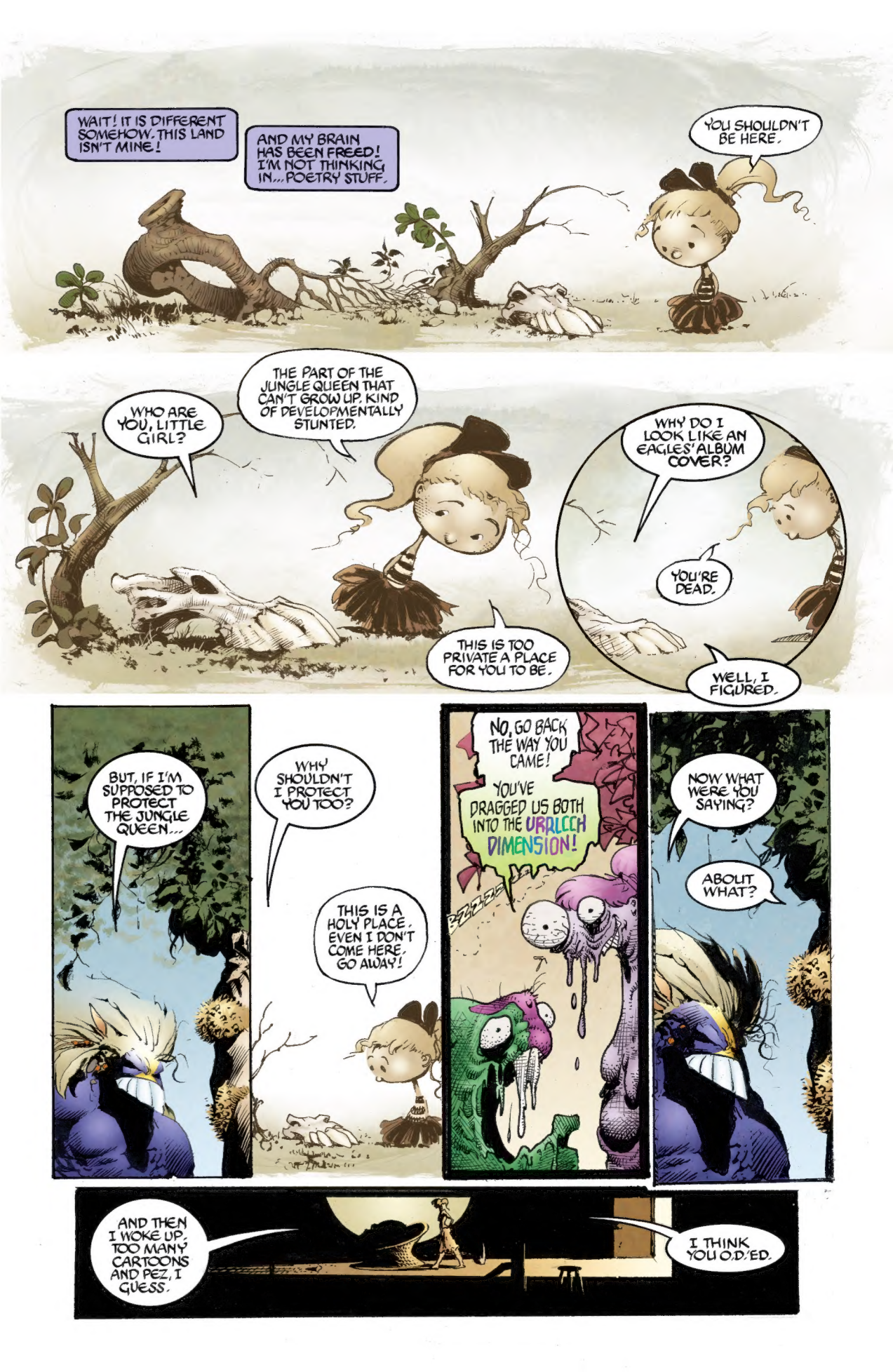
THIS IS GETTING QUITE DEEP, AND I'M STARTING TO FEAR... I'LL BE DROWNED IN AN OCEAN OF DIET ROOT BEER...
DIET ROOT BEER?
YES, THAT'S WHAT IT SEEMED.
I'VE FLASHED BACK TO MY DUMPSTER. SO ALL THIS WAS A DREAM?
NO, I GUESS NOT. FOR THESE GUYS ARE STILL HERE...
STILL RIPPING...
AND TRIPPING ME, AND WHAT I FEAR...

...IS IF THESE GUYS KILL ME...
...AND MAKE ME ROLL OVER...
...I'LL BE JUST AS DEAD...
...BACK ON JULIE'S OLD SOFA.

CHEW-BALLA
CHEW-BALLA
CHEW-BALLA
CHEW-BALLA
CHEW-BALLA
CHEW-BALLA
CHEW-BALLA
OH, YIPE.
AND MY FISH IS BOUND TOO IN HER BOWL MADE OF GLASS...
YIPE AGAIN AND ONCE AGAIN YIPE!
THESE FEARS ALL NAMED DAVE HAVE ME TRUSSED LIKE A SNIPE!
BUT BOWLS CAN CUT ROPE, IF THEY'RE CAREFULLY SMASHED!

I'M SURROUNDED BY FEARS. THERE'S JUST ONE THING TO DO!
I MUST FACE WHAT THE FEARS MAKE ME FEARFUL TO DO.
I MUST RIP OFF THIS MASK! IT IS TIME THAT I KNEW...
...WHAT LIES BENEATH... IT IS BEANS?
IT IS PODS! WHAT A STRANGE THING TO DO.
TO KEEP SEEDS IN MY FACE...AND HOW ODD!


FOR AS THESE SEEDS FALL, PUNCHING HOLES THROUGH THE LIGHT...
THEY SMITE AND COLLIDE, IN A DESPERATE FIGHT...
TO BE FIRST IN THE SOIL, WHICH ERUPTS IN A COIL OF TREES, VINES AND GRASSES, ALL BROUGHT TO A BOIL. THIS IS CREATION, AND THE LAND THAT EMERGES IS ONE I REMEMBER! MY MEMORY SURGES!
THIS LAND I RULE! I SCREAM TO THE SKY! THIS PLACE NEEDS A TARZAN AND I AM THAT GUY!


WAIT! IT IS DIFFERENT SOMEHOW. THIS LAND ISN'T MINE!
AND MY BRAIN HAS BEEN FREED! I'M NOT THINKING IN... POETRY STUFF.
YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE.
WHO ARE YOU, LITTLE GIRL?
THE PART OF THE JUNGLE QUEEN THAT CAN'T GROW UP. KIND OF DEVELOPMENTALLY STUNTED.
THIS IS TOO PRIVATE A PLACE FOR YOU TO BE.
WHY DO I LOOK LIKE AN EAGLES' ALBUM COVER?
YOU'RE DEAD.
WELL, I FIGURED.
BUT, IF I'M SUPPOSED TO PROTECT THE JUNGLE QUEEN...
WHY SHOULDN'T I PROTECT YOU TOO?
THIS IS A HOLY PLACE. EVEN I DON'T COME HERE. GO AWAY!
NO, GO BACK THE WAY YOU CAME!
YOU'VE DRAGGED US BOTH INTO THE URRLEEH DIMENSION!
BZZZZZ
NOW WHAT WERE YOU SAYING?
ABOUT WHAT?
AND THEN I WOKE UP. TOO MANY CARTOONS AND PEZ, I GUESS.
I THINK YOU O.D.'ED.

FUNNY, BUT I KEEP SEEING THAT DOLL SHE MADE OF MR. GONE, AND BE-HEADED. THAT MUST MEAN SOMETHING!

AND THE THINGS THAT COULD BE UNDER MY MASK...

LOOK, MAXX, JUST BECAUSE THAT *FREAK* NEARLY KILLED US IS NO REASON TO *FIXATE* ON HIM...AND BECAUSE YOU *IMAGINE* YOU HAVE A *RABBIT'S HEAD* IN THIS *SAVAGE LAND* OF YOURS, IS CERTAINLY *NO REASON* TO FEAR YOU MIGHT ACTUALLY HAVE ONE *HERE!*

IT'S SO *CLASSIC*, MAXX. YOU *IMAGINE* YOURSELF AS THIS *GODLIKE JUNGLE AVENGER* BECAUSE IN YOUR REAL LIFE YOU HAVE SO *LITTLE* POWER.

AND WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT, REALLY. WE *ALL* NEED SOME PLACE TO GO AWAY TO...

SOME PLACE WE CAN BE THE PEOPLE WE *SHOULD'VE* BEEN INSTEAD OF THE PEOPLE WE'VE *BECOME*.

SOME *SAFE* PLACE WHERE WE CAN ESCAPE...

...REALITY.

HIDE...

I KNOW THERE ARE THINGS I'D LIKE TO *HIDE* FROM...

MY MASK... I CAN FEEL IT CRAWLING...

PLEASE... MAKE... IT... STOP...

shhhhh

JUST *REST* NOW. IT'S OKAY... S'OKAY...